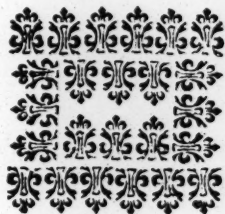


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SOME ²
Brief Directions
FOR
IMPROVEMENT
OF
Infant-Baptism.

Imprimatur: *Guil. Junc.* Mar. 12. 1677.



L O N D O N,
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BRIEF DIRECTIONS

FOR

IMPROVEMENT

O F

INFANT BAPTISM.

Rom. 3. The latter end of the first Verse,
and the former end of the second.

What profit is there of Circumcision?

Much every way.

H A T H it not been right-
ly (as well as long) said, *Spiritus Pauli,*
that St. Paul's Spirit is *Exemplum Mi-*
the Ministers Pattern? *nistri.*

Who would not choose in writing
(yea and speaking) to imitate this
Copy? He (according to the Wis-
dom given unto him) when he de-
livered Doctrines, did withal deli-
ver Cautions, to prevent the wrong
Use and Application of them.

A 2

Accor-

Rom. 2. especially the last verses.

Heb. 12. 14.

Rom. 2. 17.

Armilla Catrehet. pag. 92.

Accordingly, having taught in the foregoing Chapter, that both Jews and Gentiles were under an Obligation to look after regenerating Grace, that neither of them without inside-holiness should come to the blessed-making Sight of God. He foresaw, that the Jew, who stood much upon his points, bearing himself high, and boasting of the Law would be ready to raise Objections, and say, *Paul*, you are a Leveller, you take down that Partition-wall, which was of Gods setting up. Have the Jews no way the better of the Gentiles? Do you make Circumcision a meer insignificant Ceremony?

To this the Apostle makes his Reply: Though he hold fast his former Conclusion, That pure Religion, and undefiled before God is an inward thing, lying first and most open to Gods Eye; yet he freely grants,

That during the Old Testament dispensation, the Jews Priviledges were far before those of other Nations; they lay nearer to, and fair-

er

See Synopsis Critic. ad locum.

er for Grace, who lived under the means of Grace, and he gives us fair footing for the

DOCTRINE.

Circumcision was an Ordinance of great use (and advantage) to the Jews.

I am aware, that the Answer given in the words, *Much every way*, is thought first to refer to the first Question, *What advantage hath the Jew?* Yet some who are of that opinion, do apprehend that they are also respective to the second *Quere*, concerning the profitableness of Circumcision. *Idem, see Pifcator ad locum.*

We find Holy Stephen reckoning it as a prime favour vouchsafed to the Fathers, that the Covenant of Circumcision was given 'em. And we often find the Uncircumcised laid low. Acts 7. 8.
2 Sam. 1. 20.
1 Sam. 31. 4.

If inquiry be, *What Circumcision was?*

I answer, It is thus described.

It was a Sacrament of the Old

See *Wilson's*
Dictionary.

Testament, signifying and sealing up to the people of the Jews, their entrance into Covenant with God, for the remission of their Sins, and mortification of their Lusts, by faith in Christ to come.

Gen. 17. 8, 9,
10.

The order was, that the Male-Children should be circumcised: This Sign was set on that part of the Body, *membrum virile*, which is proper to Men; yet were not Women in *Israel* (though naturally incapable of the Sign) counted uncircumcised, but as circumcised in the Males; the Gentiles are still set forth under the notion of the uncircumcision: And the Apostle, whose preaching was to Jewish Women, is said to have the Gospel of the Circumcision committed to him.

Gal. 2. 7, 8,
&c.

What Circumcision was as an Action, and what it was as an Ordinance, hath been hinted.

It may next be put to the question,

Wherein lay the Benefit of Circumcision?

Answ. That we may give the better resolution, we will first touch on Circum-

Circumcision as a Sign, and shew, that (as such) it was advantageous.

(1.) It was a sign of a differencing and distinguishing nature : Hereby, they who were Jews by nature were severed from Sinners of the Gentiles; the Children brought forth within (and by) the Church (who were visibly belonging to the Kingdom of God) were (by this) known (and parted) from the Children of the Heathens, who (as to their visible state) were in Satans Kingdom. They who do not judge this a gracious Vouchsafement, are far and far from my Judgment. Hath not the Seel on which God hath written the name of Holy, the upper hand of that which is profane ? Doth not the Mountain of the Lord overtop the Mountains of the World ?

Signum distinctionis.

Gal. 2. 15.

(2.) The Sign of Circumcision was a Sign of a demonstrative and instructing sort. Two grand Truths were taught in and by it, to wit, *The great Malady, and the Sovereign Remedy of Fallen Man.*

Signum demonstrativum.

1. They

See Dr. Taylor
on the Types.

Fer. 4. 4.
Deut. 30. 6.
Rom. 2. the
last.

Exod. 4. 25.

1. They who looked at it with a right eye, saw in and through it, the grievous pollution and defilement of Mans Nature. That very part was chosen (and pitched on) by God, to be the Seat of Circumcision, which might (when thought on) preach to persons, what cause they had to be ashamed of their natural impurities. Had not the hearts of Men had a Foreskin on 'em, which caused them to stand in need of Spiritual Circumcision, there had been no order nor use for circumcising and paring away the Foreskin of the Flesh. It was Circumcision in the Spirit and of the Heart, which God called loudest for.

(2) Circumcision served as a Glass, through which they who had Spiritual Sight might foresee that cleansing; which was to be had through a Redeemers sufferings. It is clear, that blood was drawn of those that were circumcised: On this account, *Zipporah* fell foully on *Moses*, as if he had been a bloody Husband, when her Son had come under that Ordinance.

The

The foreness of the men of *Schem* after they had been brought under it, is noted. They were the best men, that were hereby most led to look before 'em to the cleansing Merit and Spirit of the Mediator that was then to come. I will here only add as to this,

(3.) Circumcision was an obliging binding Sign. Is it not fitly compared to a golden Clasp, whereby Gods *Israel* was fastened (or fast tyed) to him? It brought persons under a solemn Obligation to observe that Law which God then set forth. Signum obligativum.

Gal. 5. 3.

Now let these two particulars be laid in the ballance of a sound Judgment, and certainly they will weigh much.

(1.) Was it not a priviledg, for persons at once to have their Sin, and him that was to save them from it, set before them.

(2.) Was it not a Priviledge, to be under a sacred Bond to God? Servire Deo, est regnare
How true (and taking) is that expression, *Gods Service is perfect freedom*? Are they not honourable, that

that are Retainers to the King of Glory?

Rom. 4. 11.

See Mr. Blake
his Covenant
Sealed.

Gen. 17. 7, 10.

See Dr. Man-
ron on the Im-
provement of
Baptism.

And as there was much of profit in Circumcision considered as a Sign, so was there also, when looked at under the consideration of a Seal. Seals, (as is well known) are for several uses, and ends; such as secrecy, security, warranty. I shall (at present) hint, That this Seal of Circumcision served to ratifie Gods gracious Covenant, and to confirm the Faith of the Faithful, as to the great point, that God would be their God, and the God of their Seed.

The Covenant that is preached generally in the Word, is applyed particularly in the Seals (or Sacraments) annexed to it.

But what I said on the two foregoing Questions, was but to make way for that which follows.

*Of what use is this Doctrine
unto us?*

Ans. The main Application we shall now make of it is, without controversie Baptism is an Ordinance of

of great use and advantage unto Christians.

The genuineness and reasonableness of this Inference shines into every open eye. They who grant that it is Gods appointment, cannot fairly deny, that it is beneficial to men. Is not the good will of him that dwelt in the Bush, in every one of his Institutions ?

See Mr. *Whiston's* Essay, pag. 1, 2.

Mr. *Ranew* on Meditation, pag. 12, 13.

Were Gods Ordinances under the Law advantageous, and are they not so in Gospel-times ? Are not larger measures of the Spirit now poured forth ?

But I find my self here way-laid, Whilst Disputes are held, who are the Subjects that are to receive Baptism, and whether some usages should attend the Administration; there are those risen up, who are not known by the name of *Socinians*, who decry, disclaim, (yea disdain) all Water-Baptism.

With grief be it written, and read, their Quarrels against this Ordinance of Christ, are fathered upon the Spirit of Christ. I was not cut out for a Man of War ; I shall only point

point to those for whom this Paper is intended, that it is clear.

Acts 28. 19,
20.

(1) There is a Baptism enjoined and appointed, which is the duty and proper work of Men, of the Lords Ministers : Now this can be no other than Baptism by Water.

He who saith it was the duty of the Apostles to baptize with the Holy Ghost, takes on him the task, to prove

See Mr. Scandret, Mr. Faldo, and Mr. Danson against the Quakers.

(1.) That they were capable of so doing.

(2.) That they sinned, when they fell short of, and attained not this Effect ; but neither of these things are proveable.

Mat. 28. 19,
20.

(2.) There is a Baptism instituted and enjoined, which is of an external and outward nature, and is joined to and with such teaching, as is of that sort. Now this is Water-Baptism ; yea the using of such a Baptism is to continue to the End of the World.

(3.) There remains no room for questioning this Truth, that the blessed Apostles of our most Blessed Lord did use and administer Baptism

tism by Water. To say, or think, that they (or any of them) did it without a Commission or Command from Christ, is most unreasonable.

But my next work will lye (I will not say against but) with those persons, who are free and full for Water Baptism ; but are utterly unsatisfied, as to Infant Baptism. I believe, they would not say, of what avail can Baptism be to Infants? if they did belief and see that it was Gods will, they should partake of it.

I cannot but count it among Gods great Favours to his Church, that Infant-Baptism wants no such weak Defenders as my poor self: Many of the excellent of the Earth have (to the best purpose) written for it.

*Mr. Baxter,
Mr. Whiston,
Mr. Willis, &c.*

I desire (calmly and coolly) to hint some of the things which have much weighed with me, which I perceive have also been judged weighty, by my betters.

(1.) In the first Covenant (the Covenant of Works) Infants were taken in with Parents. They were so also, in the former Edition of the

*Vide Theses Sal-
murienses de
Pædobapt.*

second

second Covenant, the Covenant of Grace. And I find this spoken by way of encouragement to the convinced Jews, that they would embrace and entertain the Gospel. The grand Promise (or Covenant) continued, as to them, so to their Children. It would have been no small bar, to have kept 'em out of the New-Testament Church, if their Children might not have been, as aforetime, taken in with 'em. I hope many who are Dissenters, do consent to this, That their Children are comprehended within Gods gracious Covenant, (*Are not they without God in the World, who are strangers to the Covenant of Promise?*) And methinks this Argument wants not strength. The Seal of the Covenant belongs to all the Covenanters, that are capable of it.

*Fæderati signa-
ti.*

1 Cor. 7. 14.

αγία.

(2.) I find that the Children that have (at least) one believing Parent are Saints, or Holy Ones; and may not Saints be baptized?

(3.) When Housholds were baptized, I can see nothing like a Warrant, for excepting the Infants that

that were therein, or for saying ;
there were no Infants there.

(4.) When order is given for
discipling (or making Disciples of) *Mat. 28. 19;*
all Nations ; (and those on whose *20.*
Necks Circumcision was laid are *Μαθητεύσατε.*
counted Disciples.) And withal *See Spanhem*
there is order that those who are *Dubia Evang.*
Disciples shall be baptized. *Par. 3. p. 93.* How
can I shut out those little Disciples
from Baptism ? who, though they
cannot learn as others (at present)
may be entred into Christs School,
in order to their Learning for the
future.

(5.) It is evident, that when
some presented such Children unto
Christ, (charitably and rightly be-
lieving, that he who shewed so much
favour to the Aged, would not shut
Infants out of his Favour) though
his Disciples were angry, he was
well pleased with it, and encoura-
ged the bringing of such Infants to
him. *Mat. 19. 13,*
I do not say he baptized 'em : *14.*
the Scripture tells us, he did not *Mark 10.*
with and by his own hands admini-
ster this Ordinance : But let this be
thought on. *Jo. 4. 2.*

1. Children have as much need now, as then of being presented unto Christ.

2. Parents should have as great a desire now as any had then, to be presenters of their Babes to him.

3. There is as much cause to hope that he will bless Children that are presented to him, with special Covenant Blessings, now as there was then.

4. What Ordinance is there, in which the Faithful can present their Children so to God, as in Baptism they may ?

(6.) We have it under our blessed Saviours Hand, that of Infants of such as were brought to him, in the Arms of others, of those who are of that age, and not only of those that are of that quality, is the Kingdom of God, and Heaven. Take that Phrase in a lower sense, and it is taken for the Church, considered as visible. Now may not Ministers extend Baptism, as far as Christ doth extend Church-membership ?

But such as are for Controversies, may do well to go further ; we will only

Mat. 19. 14.
Mark. 10.

only in the short Discourse which we shall continue, apply our selves to those who esteem it a Priviledge, to have their Children within the Church; and withal judg, that the Gospel hath not made the Priviledges of Gods People fewer or less, than they were under the Law.

I will take this for granted, That the Infants of Christians are every whit as capable of profit by Baptism, as the Jewish Infants were by Circumcision. Children were Children then.

See of this *Cal-*
vins Institut.
lib. 4. cap. 16.
sect. 20.

I will make some Essays, as to the answering and resolving of some cases of concernment.

The First is;

*In what Particulars (among others)
is Baptism useful and beneficial to
Infants?*

Answ. 1. Is it not a prime Priviledg, to be solemnly admitted, entered, and owned as visible Members of that Body, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the Head? Hath not this Grace written on it, when persons

*1 Cor. 12. 13,
25, 26, 27.*

Baptized persons should love the whole Church, and not only their own party.

See Mr. Baxter's first Book, near the end And his Family Book.

See Mr. Blakes Covenant sealed.

1 Tim. 2. 1, 2.

Isai. 62. 1.

sons are received, as belonging to the Congregation of Christs Flock, not only to the particular Congregation in which the Ordinance is administered, but to the Universal Church? Now this is the case of Infants, when baptized: As Kings at their Coronation, as Burgeses of a Corporation (by the usual usage there) have their just Title to their places openly acknowledged; so is their Church-membership and Interest in Gods Covenant.

1. May it not deservedly be placed among chief Favours and Honours, that Infants are eminently and evidently interested in the Prayers that are preferred and put up in and for the Church? I know, the Churches Prayers are to go for all sorts of Men; but it is especially for *Zion's* sake, that the Godly cannot be silent, and for *Jerusalem's* sake, that they cannot hold their peace: The Prayers that are preferred for those that are within, may have more of faith and confidence in 'em, as to prevailing, than those that only respect them that are without.

out. *There is hope in Israel ; more* Exrah 10. 2.
hope than ordinary.

3. Doth it not deserve to be placed among choice Prerogatives , that Infants by being within the Church, are under that special Providence of God, which eyeth and is displayed for and on behalf of his Church ? Is not the Lord (in a peculiar way) the Keeper of *Israel* ? *Psal. 121. 4.* is not his Church to him, as his Garden, his Vineyard, which he takes care of and preserves from hurt day and night ? Doth he overlook the tender Flowers, Plants and Buds that are therein ? Have not these *Mat. 18. 2. 10* little ones their Angels to attend 'em ?

4. Do not Infants by their station and standing in the Church lye nearer to, and fairer for that special grace and blessing which is there bestowed ? Are they not thereby within the Lines of Spiritual Communication ? Far is it from me, to limit the Holy One of *Israel* : The Wind of his Grace and Spirit bloweth, where he listeth. But I read, *Joh. 3. 8.* and so may others, That the Church

Isai. 54.

ches Children are under a Promise of being taught of God ; as also, that God added to the Church such as were for Salvation. Gods high Blessings come out of *Zion* : And of old, his Priests had a particular order to bless his People.

Numbers 6.
the latter end.

See Mr. *Church*
of Infants
Right.
Consecramur
Patri, &c.

5. Is it not greatly to the advantage (as well as honour) of Baptized Infants, that as they are related and visibly united to Jesus Christ, so they are consecrated, devoted, and dedicated unto him, and unto the Father, and Holy Spirit, together with him? Their being baptized in (or into) the Name of the Trinity, is interpreted of their being engaged in the Service of the Trinity.

See Mr. *Hol-*
lingworth, the
Catechist Ca-
techized.

Is it not of great and good signification, that Infants are in and by Baptism pre-engaged to a Christian Course, when they have less prejudice against it?

But I must hasten, and let what I have already said suffice as to the first case, that I may also have room to say something to what follows; and the case spoken to will receive fur-

further and fuller resolution in by my resolving the next, which is ;

Of what use is it to Believing Parents, that their Children are Baptized in their Infancy ?

1. Serious Parents make (for substance) the same preparation for the Presenting of their Babes to Baptism, that they would do, if they were then to present themselves at the Lords Table. Is it not the same Covenant, that is sealed in the one and in the other ? And is not such preparation a Privilege, as well as a Duty to 'em ?

Alas ! others do otherwise ; See Mr. Cotton's Life of Faith, pag. 389.

2. Seeing Children are so near to Parents, that they are even *Pars parentum*, Parts of 'em ; Is it not of prime advantage (and comfort) to 'em, to see these Parts of themselves owned, as Children of God the Father, as Members of Christ, as in Covenant with the Holy Ghost, as joyned to that blessed Society the Church Militant on Earth, and as (visibly) Heirs of that Glory which is the Portion of the Church Triumphant in Heaven ? B 3

See Mr. Baxter's Review.

3. Doth

See Mr. *Barrett*
on the Cove-
nant, pag. 430.
&c.

3. Doth it not greatly conduce to the strengthening of the Faith of Parents, when they are pleading with the Lord, for his special Favour to their Infants; that he hath entituled them to this Seal, as well as to the Writings of the Covenant? Though Gods Word is a sufficient Warrant, and I do not say, the Seal makes it surer in it self; yet in this frail state, it tends more to confirm and assure our Hearts, when by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, even by Writing and Seal, he certifies and satisfies us, concerning his good Will to our little ones.

4. Is it not greatly helpful to godly Parents, that by presenting their Infants to God in Baptism, they lay new and strong Bonds on their own Souls, to walk before God as his Covenant-people; and (particularly) to take all care, in the Religious Education of their Children? Who finds not all Cords (even the strongest of 'em) few and weak enough, to hold his Heart up and close to God?

And

And this leads me to the next
Quare or Case.

What Duties (among others) are incumbent upon Parents, who are for presenting (or have presented) their Children to God in Baptism, in the Use and Exercise whereof, they may (with good ground) hope, that God will bestow on them (and theirs) Covenant-Blessings?

Ans. 1. Before they bring their Children to it, they are bound to take into their serious thoughts, the sad and sinful state of their Posterity, as they are Children of *Adam*, and the admirable Grace of God, who is pleased to deal with 'em as Children of *Abraham*: They need washing, and he sets open a Fountain. And

2. They are deeply to humble themselves for their own failures, yea false dealings in Gods Covenant, and in the way of self-judging, to go to the Lord Jesus, and through him, to the Father, for Reconciliation, and for renewals of Covenant-

Rom. 5. 12.

Psal. 51. 5.

See Mr. *Durham* on the Decalogue, pag.

Mercy ; their earnest Prayers should go before 'em, when they are to go upon this Affair.

Secondly. In , and during the time of the Administration of the Ordinance,

1. They should look at the Minister as representing Christ ; and through him, their eyes should be fixed on the Father and Fountain of Goodness ; their Hearts should have an Holy Awe and Dread for him, with whom they have firstly and chiefly to do ; and a deep afflicting sorrow, that they have walked so unworthily before him : And their Faith should go along with the Ministers (and their own) Suits and Prayers, that Water and Blood may meet, that the Grace signified (and not barely the Sign of it) may be conferred.

2. The Language and working of every Parents Heart should be at this Rate : Lord ! All the Interest that I have in this Child I freely resign up to thee. Thou didst graciously give it , and I do (upon the Warrant of thy Good Word) give it

They who are present at the Administration should also have such thoughts.
See the larger Catechism , p. 130.

it back unto thee; I rejoyce more in its being thine, than in its being mine. I wait for thy Grace, that I may live up to this Vouchsafement of thy Love to me, and it; and (in and through that Grace) resolve to walk in all holiness with thee, and before it.

Lastly. After the Administration of the Ordinance, not only during the Childs Infancy, but when it is grown into years, Parents should make use and improvement of its Infant-Baptism; and that,

First, In reference to that great end of all, the Glorifying of God.

1. They should spend no little of their time (and thoughts) in way of admiring the exceeding Riches of Gods Grace, who was pleased to take their Babes into the Arms of his Favour, and Bosom of his Church. O how great is his Goodness! who when Children cannot come to him on their own Legs, is pleased in a way of differencing Mercy to receive them, when brought by their Parents hands. That Covenant may very well be stiled a Covenant of Grace,

Psal. 31. 19.

Grace, it hath Grace in it, in the heights thereof, that doth comprehend the little Branches together with their Roots.

1 Joh. 4. 19.

1. Is not this leading love? He loves first; He loves those that at present cannot actually love him; He drinks a draught of love to those that cannot yet pledge him. And consequently

Deut. 7. 7, 8.

2. This is purely free Love. The Lord loveth his Peoples Infants (as indeed he loveth their persons) because he loveth them. Doth he not see their Infants born in their Blood, in an unlovely plight?

Ezek. 16. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Ephes. 2. 2, 3.

Secondly. Parents should give God the Glory of his Sovereignty. They should own him, as having all the Right and Titles that can be thought of, to their Children. They should still look on 'em as bearing his Name; they are in their Baptism declared Subjects of Jesus Christ, as King and Head of his Church. Their desires and care should run this way, that they may be brought up for God, who were born and brought up to him.

Thirdly.

Thirdly. Parents should acknowledge and honour the Faithfulness of God; and this they should do, in continuing in humble and importunate cries to (and pleading with) him, that the Grace of the Covenant may appear in 'em, as the Covenant of Grace hath been sealed to 'em. That their Prayers may be more full and fervent, note they this, That as the whole Word of God is the Rule of Prayer, and to those that pray, the ground of Conscience; so the Words of Promise, which are in Baptism sealed, are the great ground of confidence.

See Mr. Gee
of Prayer.

It is said in his Book, whose Book is called, *All in Worth*, that Promises and Prayers resemble those two Figures, that of Six and that of Nine; They are the same Figure, only herein they differ, the one is turned downwards as the other is upwards. Are not the most believing Prayers, Promises bent up towards Heaven, and put into Suit?

See Mr. Hol-
lingworth of
the Holy Spi-
rit.

Now as God hath said and sealed, that he will be the God of his Peoples Seed, that he will bless the Fruit

Deuter. 7. 13.

Psal. 112. 2.

Isai. 44. 3, 4.

Fruit of their Womb, that their Generation shall be blessed, that he will pour out his Spirit on their Offspring, that his Word and Spirit shall not depart from the Mouth of their Seed. It is an Honour to him, when Parents spread these Promises before him, asking and arguing on this wise:

Lord! thou didst without our asking take our Children into Covenant; wilt thou not upon our asking give 'em the Grace of it? Thou hast granted 'em the outward Sign, wilt thou deny 'em the inward Grace? If thou wilt give them Grace, they will then give thee Glory; we are humbly bold with thee: May we pray, and prevail!

Having thus shewed how the hearts of Parents after the Baptism of their Infants, should be lifted up to God: We will now point at the Duties that lie upon and before them, in reference to their Baptized Children.

And 1. The very consideration of their Childrens Baptism, doth not only engage 'em to give them Instruction, but withal furnish 'em with

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with excellent matter , whilst they are instructing 'em. I will instance in some points and particulars. They may and should mind them.

1. That the distance betwixt God and Man, the Creator and his Creature, is so great, that they cannot hold Communion, except on Gods part, there be great and gracious condescension. Now this condescending hath been, in that God hath been pleased to deal and proceed with Man by way of Covenant.

*Psal. 113. 5, 6.
See of this excellently Mr. Whilston.*

2. The first Covenant is by Man violated , and he is now incapable of entring Life by that Door : No meer man (since *Adams* Fall) can obey personally, perfectly, and perpetually. For

Rom. 8. 3.

3. All that descend from him in the ordinary way are conceived and born in Sin : Were they not so, they would not stand in need of Baptismal Washing. Guilt is upon men, and filth is within 'em, even when they are Infants.

Rom. 5. 12.

4. There is an absolute necessity upon all, to look after those two great joynt-blessings, Pardon of, and Power

Power against Sin, Justification and Sanctification. Except persons be washed, they have no part or share in Christ, or in the saving Benefits that come by him.

5. Such is the Grace of God, that he in and by virtue of a second and new Covenant, maketh over to persons prime priviledges, even Righteousness, Peace, and Joy full of Glory, even on this side and before Glory.

6. This Covenant is so far mutual, that they who expect the Blessings of it, are to attend to the Duties of it. In every proper and full Covenant there is something promised, and something required. Mercy's and Duty's like the Angels which appeared in *Jacob's Ladder* are some descending, and some ascending.

7. It is exceedingly to the furtherance of Mans best good, that God hath set up certain visible Ordinances, and set or put 'em, as Seals to his Covenant, which the Church hath long known by the Name of Sacraments, whereof Baptism

Ratio dati & accepti. See the late excellent Dr. Manton, about Improving Baptism.

^tism is one: These are visible words, or Sermons to our Eyes; they are tokens of Gods Love, and Bonds to Mans Obedience.

Further. As Parents are engaged by the Baptism of their Children, to instruct 'em; so are they also to take that course which is most likely to set home their Instructions and to render them effectual.

1. They are (when need is) to join Correction to Instruction. This way the Lord leads 'em. When was his House without a Rod in it?

*Prov. 23. 13.
See Mr. Case,
Instruction
Correction.*

2. That their Instructions may make deeper impressions, as they are to pray over 'em, to press, inculcate, teach 'em diligently (and even whet them upon their Children) so they are to do it with the greatest tenderness and affectionateness possible. The Wise Man sets down together with his good Mothers Advice, her Arguings: *What, my Son, the Son of my Womb, the Son of my Vows!* Affections tend to move Affections: Hot Iron will sooner enter: They who speak most from, speak most to the heart.

*Deut. 7. 7.
Acues ea dili-
gentissime.*

*Prov. 31. 2, 3,
4.*

A cor. 12, ad cor.

They

*Exempla mo-
vent.*

*Psal. 122. 1.
Non solum ire,
sed eamus.*

*Ephes. 6. 4.
See Mr. Kid-
der on the
place.*

3. They are carefully to com-
mend as well as command the exer-
cise of Piety; their Examples are
to render their Exhortings more
moving and influential; they must
not only say *Go*, but *Come let us go*
to the House of the Lord: They must
lead them to Closet-services, and in
the fear of an Oath or idle Word.

O that a Spirit of Humiliation
came and rested on Parents! that
they have no more observed that or-
der about bringing up their Chil-
dren in the Nurture and Admoniti-
on of the Lord, that they have ex-
pressed no more wisdom, gravity,
and love, in their speeches to and
carriages before 'em, that they have
no more travelled in birth, that
Christ might be formed in 'em.

That little room which is left me,
must be reserved for the resolving
of this grand Case.

Which

*Which way may we that are growing
(or grown) into years, use and
improve for God, our Infant-Bap-
tism?*

Before I answer positively, I shall
premise,

Though Infant-Baptism was re-
ceived in the beginning of our time,
yet the Efficacy and Benefit of it is
intended for (and is to be extended
to) all our time. Though I press
not upon others their exposition,
there are eminent Divines, that ex-
pound that Phrase in Canticles about
the Churches Navel concerning Bap-
tism, where it is compared to a
round Goblet that wanteth not Li-
quor; still may more and more grace
be derived from Heaven through
it.

*Can. 7. 2.
Mr. Cotton.
Mr. Swynnock.*

2. I have been long and clear of
the opinion of an able and experien-
ced Writer, that it hath no little
conduced to mens calling in questi-
on the Lawfulness of Infant-Bap-
tism, because they themselves have
no more found (and others near

Mr. Firmon.

'em have no more evidence) the usefulness and profitableness thereof.

And now I go on, to shew, *That by Influences from the Spirit of God, Arguments taken from our being Baptized, may (whilst we live) be beneficial to us.*

1. We should hence press upon our selves, our being exceeding diligent in reading, hearing, and conferring on the Truths of God. Should not we that were so early owned as Christ's Disciples, be learning, whilst we be living? Should we not be for growing, as in other Grace, so in the Knowledg of our Lord and Saviour? Many have not the Knowledg of God; this is their sin, and shame.

Prov. 2. 2, 3,
4.
2 Pet. 3. ult.

2. We should from the consideration of our Baptism, be fenced and armed against all sorts of Temptations, particularly, such as lye towards sensuality and flesh-pleasing. Should we touch any unclean thing? Should we take one excessive Cup? Should we for any time lye in (or on)

on) that, which is called the *Devils Pillow*, to wit, *Idleness*?

It is said of one that was tempted to filthiness, that she did beat back *Baptizata sum*, the Tempter, with these words, *I See Trap. on am Baptized*; It is said she quenched the Fire of Lust, with the Water of Baptism, or rather, with the Grace derived through it. *Cant. 7. 2.*

3. We should from this Ordinance be engaged to fight a good fight; to stand to, and keep up a continual War against the Flesh, so against the Devil, and the World. It is a common and proper notion, that in the word *Sacrament*, there is an Allusion to an Oath that Soldiers when listed took to be true to, and courageous under their General. Should we hearken to Satan's suggestions, or harbour the evil thoughts he throws into our minds? Should we suffer the World to encroach upon us, to shorten or marr our secrets or joint-addresses to God? Are we not sworn to the contrary?

But methinks I hear some say, *We think, if we had been baptized at ripe years, we could rather have made these and other good uses of our Baptism.* But what do you judge?

Is it not a great disadvantage to a grown Christian that his Baptism was received, when he was not capable of understanding the Nature and Ends of it?

I will before I declare my Judgment, lay down this Supposition;

See Mr. *Hollin* worth on this.

That a considerate person cannot in reason any more question the Truth and Reality of his being Baptized, than that such persons were his Parents: In both cases, he hath as great a moral certainty, as he can desire.

This being premised, I now set down (for substance) what hath been set upon my Spirit, many years, that in sundry respects it may more contribute to our best good, that we were baptized whilst Infants of days,
than

than if our Baptism had been deferred, till we had been Men and Women of years.

Of this Subject some have excellently enlarged *Dr. Ford.*
Mr. Whiston.

May my short touches be blessed, to the touching of many Hearts !

1. Hath not this a most powerful tendency to keep us in the owning of the true Religion, and Worship of God, and to arm us against all sollicitations to Idolatry ? Is it not too too apparent, That Education in false ways doth mightily engage persons to 'em ? How few instances can be given of Nations that will

Jer. 2. 2.

change their God, though he be one, who by nature is no God ? Men are for sticking as to the Inheritance so to the Religion of their Fathers. Shall not we therefore feel great force in this Argument ? We were born, and dedicated, in the beginning of our time, as to the Worship of the True God, so to the True Worship of God. Our Godly Parents bound us thereto ; shall we

On this Mr.
Whiston to
the best pur-
pose treateth.

hearken to those that would draw us aside, or reverse our Parents engagements, or vary knowingly (in one point) from that straight Rule, God hath given us to serve him by? If we should offer to Apostatize, or degenerate, would not this be a most sinful Sin?

Colos. 3. 5.

*Uti Mundo frui
Deo.*

Rev. 12. 1.

Jer. 2. 13.

2. Doth not our being Baptized in Infancy conduce not onely to arm us against Idolatry of the grosser sort, but Covetousness, which (in Gods Book) stands arraigned as Idolatry? Shall we live to the World, who were so early devoted unto God? Are not we by our Baptism bound to use the World for God, and bound out from enjoying it in the place and stead of God? Shall we not look at it as we do at Fire, or Water, as a good Servant, but a very bad Master. Shall we not be for keeping it under our Feet, and out of our Hearts? Shall it be said, That we at once commit two evils, forsaking the Fountain of Living Waters, and hewing out to themselves Cisterns that

that are broken, and will hold no water?

3. May we not from a fair and full view (and review) of our Baptism, find our Faith exceedingly strengthened, and the doubts that recur and return upon us resolved?

1. How often (and justly) are we troubled, that we rise no higher and reach no further in our Religious Services?

Yet, if we find the Lord so far fixing our hearts, that we are at one, never willfully to decline any part of that Service, and to attend chiefly to the inward part of it; and in the close of all our Services, to close with, and rely on Christ as our Saviour: There is no reason we should droop, or give way to dejections and sinking discouragements?

Did not the Lord set the mark of his Love upon us and seal (as to our Parents, so in and through them) to us, that he would be our God,

2 Cor. 8. 12.

when we neither had done good, nor could do him actual Service? And may not this much confirm our Belief, that he will now own us, when we are sincere, though imperfect, in his Service?

2. It doth frequently and deservedly set sadly on our Spirits, that corruption doth not only remain in us, but alas! alas! very much (at times) stir in us.

Yet if Grace have gone so far, that we have it in our hearty desire, and design, to put every sin to death, we would not leave an Hoof behind.

Take we encouragement, God will not reject us, because we are not freed from Infirmities: Who received us into his Covenant, and honoured us with the Sign and Seal of it; when he saw, that in and after our first Birth, we had in us Natures in which were the Seeds of Enormities, and not of Infirmities onely.

Secondly.

Secondly. As from the thoughts of our being taken so early into Gods House and Heart, our Faith may receive strength, so may our hope also ; and that not only that God will preserve us during this life, but withal, that he will keep our Souls in Spiritual and to Eternal life, in the way of our waiting on him.

When Holy *David* was in the *Psal.* 71. 5, 6, mouth and midst of many dangers , 17, 18. and when he saw deaths approaches, was enabled to plead before God, the Relation in which he stood to him, from his birth. He minded him, that he had been his hope from his Mothers Belly, that he had been his God from the Womb, and would he forsake him, when he was old, and gray-headed, when his natural strength failed him, sure he would not. May not Gods People use these pleas? *Lord, thou didst own us from our beginning, and wilt thou not own us in and to our end, yea, World without end ? Thou wast found*

Of this see Dr. Ford.

Isai 65. 1.

found of us , when we sought thee not, wilt thou hide thy Face from us , when in our straits we do truly (though weakly) seek thee ?

Again, Our being given to and received by the Lord whilst Infants, lays a special Obligation on us to proceed in the great work of mortifying sin , of getting the Love (which is the Life and Soul) of it taken away.

Who would not watch against, and be for bringing and keeping under an Enemy that sought to strangle him in the Birth, that hath sought his death from the very entrance of his Life, that is of an inveterate and irreconcilable Nature, that is God's Enemy, and not his onely, an Enemy against which both God and Man have engaged and even sworn him from his very Cradle? Is not Sin an Enemy of this kind ?

Thus

Thus should a gracious heart reason ; *Shall I give the least way to the lusts of the Flesh, to those of the Eye,* *Rom. 6. 3, 4.*
or the Pride of Life ; would not this be a failure, in point of Fidelity, *Gal. 5. 24.*
and not only in point of Duty ? Would it not be a breach as of other Bonds, so of my Baptismal Vow ?

Lastly. As to the quickning and farthering of our universal Obedience, it is of great concernment that we were even in Infancy bound so to obey ? Surely to sundry, this Cord is very drawing.

Shall we omit to begin the day with God, to be with him at our awaking, to enter on and follow our particular callings in his Fear, to walk with and before him in all companies and conditions, who were in the first of our time tied to all this ? Shall not his Honour be always dear to us, whose Name hath always been upon us ?

Pro-

Probably some may say, *These Arguings from and Improvings of Infant-Baptism lye fair for their hands, in whose hearts Saving Grace is wrought; But we fear we are not under those Circumstances.*

I say; Hath God awakened your Consciences? Hath he convinced you of your sins against Sacramental Engagements? (which too few are convinced of) Have you real longings for and after the Blessing and Benefit of Baptism?

Psal. 81. 10.

Write on it, as your Baptism doth engage, so it doth (no little) encourage you to cry and hope for Grace of all sorts. If you be brought thus to wrestle with the Lord, *Thou that didst order my Body to be washed in pure Water, vouchsafe to sprinkle mine Heart from an evil Conscience: Let me come to the Grace, as I did to the Laver of Regeneration. As thou hast engaged, do thou enable me*

to thy Service. How full of hopes is this case? Did God ever deny any of Grace, that was not willing to be said *Nay*?

My Advice is (as is that of my betters) that thou who readeſt this wouldeſt after deep Humiliation and Supplication (I could deſire it might be after Faſting) conſider the Tenour and Terms of the Covenant ſealed in Baptiſm, if thou canſt not in writing under thine hand, yet do with thy Mouth, and from thine Heart; bind thy ſelf out from all ſin, and to the whole of Gods Service, imploring his Grace and Strength through Chriſt, that thou mayeſt keep as well as make this Covenant.

See Mr. *Al-*
cyns, Mr. *Guth-*
ry, and lately
the Sermon at
Mr. *Johnſons*'
Funeral.

2 Cor. 8. 5.

See Dr. *Fa-*
comb of Heart-
dedication.

O how ſad is it, that many and many a one may ſay truly, as one did ſcornfully, *That he got nothing by his Baptiſm, but a Name!* O that others, (and in particular they who were Baptized by mine Hand) would think more than formerly of
their

their Baptism, and fetch Grace
thence, that they may be the most
Loyal Subjects, Loving Husbands,
Faithful Wives, Obedient Chil-
dren, Trusty Servants, True Friends,
and Good Neighbours; in a word,
Through and Through Christians:
Amen, Amen.

F I N I S.
